8: Lužbetak E-4 [no date] 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1



the first nomads to establish themselves in the Caucasus, after having forced the Cimmerians (c. 1000 B. C.) into the background. The Scythians were predominantly a pastoral people, while the tribes they subjected were agriculturalists. Then we see new waves of Indo-Europeans, the Sarmatians, sweep over the Scythian country (c. 300 B.C.—A.D. 200): we see the Maeotes, Sindae, Sauromatians, etc. submitting to the newcomers.

This contact with the nomadic civilization continued up to our own times. To recall some of the history of this region—in the first century B. C. Crimea and the northern coasts of the Black and Azov Sea belonged to the Roman Empire. It was in this region that the Goths appeared. In the fourth century the Huns became the masters of the region north of the Caucasus. In the sixth century the Khazars,[36] Avars,[37] and the Bulgars appeared in North Caucasus; in the ninth century we meet the Magyars there; in the eleventh century the Kumans,[38] and in the thirteenth and fourteenth century the Mongols, driving the inhabitants of the Caucasus higher and higher into the mountains. In the fifteenth century the Turks conquered Crimea, and the Georgian kings were made tributary to the Mongols.

A glance at our ethnographical map of the Caucasus will suffice to convince us that the situation today is essentially the same: today the North Caucasians live in very close contact with peoples who, originally if not any longer, possessed a typically nomadic culture. The Mountain Tartars (Balkarians) are most probably descendents of the Khazars or Volga-Bulgars. The Karakaitaghs seem to be turkized Mongols. The Nogai are descendents of the Golden Horde. And besides these originally Asiatic nomads we find in the Caucasus such peoples as the Kalmucks, Kumyks, etc.

This constant contact with nomadic societies perhaps from the very beginning of pastoral nomadism—certainly since the Scythian period almost 3000 years ago—throws light upon the intricate problem: Why, how and when did the North Caucasian marriage and family customary laws become so pastoral nomadic? This contact, although not sufficient to *solve* the problem, can and actually does shed considerable light upon the *adats* of the North Caucasians.

But it is not only the contact we must consider but the actual similarity of the family organization. We shall therefore briefly describe the ancient Indo-European family and then the common features of the Altai society. Physical anthropology has shown that the Caucasians have mixed (racially) with nomadic peoples coming from the North;[39] linguistics proclaims the same

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J. Hančar, "Die Ausweitung unseres Geschichtsbildes durch die sowjetische Urgeschichtsforschung," *Blick nach Osten*, 1949, No. 1—2, pp. 51—61; "Hallstatt-Kaukasus, ein Beitrag zur Klärung des Kimmerierproblems," *Mitteilung der Oesterreichischen Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Prähistorie*, LXXIII—LXXVII (1947), pp. 152—167.

[36] At least the rulers, if not all Khazars, were Turks.

[37] These Avars have no connection with the Lesghians bearing the same name. The Avars referred to are proto-Mongols, and therefore neither Turks nor true Caucasians.

[38] The Kumans are also known as the Kypchaks, or, as the Russians sometimes call them, the "Polovcy."

[39] *Supra*, pp. 11 f. The Ossetes, for example, especially certain tribes, have a strong Caucasian strain. Many centuries ago some Ossetine groups have been actually Georgianized.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl



in regard to their languages;[40] cultural anthropology, as our study clearly shows, must admit a very strong cultural connection between the North Caucasians and the various nomadic peoples with whom they have been in contact.

Although there is still much controversy connected with the complicated Indo-European problem, there is almost complete harmony when the marriage and family customary laws are being described.[41] E. Hermann[42] and O. Schrader[43] are no doubt responsible for this harmony.

The first remarkable fact about the Indo-European society is the essential absence of totemistic and mother-right practices.[44] Indo-European social life (and, we might add, religion and economy) centred round (1) the joint-family and (2) especially its male members. Although a distinction was drawn between a biological and an undivided family, the biological family was of little significance except in connection with the undivided family to which it belonged. All property belonged to the joint-family, at the head of which was the patriarch. He enjoyed the *patria potestas* in the strict sense of the word. His wife (or wives, as the case may be) was subject to him in all things. Juridically speaking, her condition and that of all female members of the family hardly differed from that of little children. Women had no part in public affairs, no part in sacrifice. In fact, women were hardly better off than slaves. Inheritance rights were reserved for the male members of the family; the first-born had very special rights. Purity of blood of all members of the joint-family was greatly insisted upon. This seems to have been the main reason why a woman was generally punished with death for a serious offense.[45] This was also most probably the reason for the custom of placing a new-born child on the ground and inviting the father to pick it up as a sign that he recognized it as his own. The girls of the family had no freedom of choice in mating; they were either captured, or, as was generally the case, they were sold off, so to speak, to the highest bidder. The bride price consisted mainly in cattle. The main matrimonial impediments were those of consanguinity and disparity of social rank. The marriage was, of course, patrilocal. The chief marriage ceremonies were those of the triple encircling of the fireplace and the bridal procession (uxorem ducere, γυναῖκα ἄγεσθαι). Virginity of the bride was very highly esteemed. The chief purpose of marriage

[40] We need but recall such important words as *aul*, *kalym*, *adat*, etc. The language of the Ossetes contains many Caucasianisms; on the other hand, the Caucasian languages clearly show Indo-European contact.

[41] Compare, for example, the description of the Indo-European family organization as presented in Dr. Wolfgang Philipp's *Weibwertung oder Mutterrecht* (Ost-Europa Verlag, Königsberg and Berlin, 1942), a Nazi publication, with that of Prof. W. Koppers, "Die Indogermanenfrage im Lichte der historischen Völkerkunde," *Anthropos*, XXX (1935), No. 1—2, pp. 8—11, or of Alphons Nehring, "Studien zur indogermanischen Kultur und Urheimat," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, IV (1936), pp. 167—181.

[42] "Die Eheformen der Urindogermanen," *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaft in Göttingen, Berlin*, 1934; also "Die Eheformen der Urindogermanen," *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, X (1934), p. 235.

[43] *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, Berlin, 1929, 2 volumes.

[44] W. Koppers, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[45] Men involved in sex offenses were generally not punished.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl



174 was the procreation of children, but especially of sons, who would one day become the performers of the sacred rites connected with ancestor worship. 58 The cult for the departed was connected with the cult of the fireplace and was 59 looked upon as the most sacred duty of the individual and of the family. Since the members of the same sib were descendents of the same ancestors, they were bound to one another in life and in death. This solidarity explains the frequency of family feuds, for blood-revenge was considered a very sacred duty. Polygyny was relatively common ; polyandry, however, was taboo. The proof of virginity, the levirate, and the regulations regarding divorce and many other matters are very similar to those still in practice among the Ossetes of the Caucasus. It is indeed worthy of note that the Ossetine *adats* differ but slightly from the customary laws of their ancestors, while, as we have observed throughout the present study, the North Caucasians, especially the Cherkess, the Abkhaz, and the Ingushi differ but little from their neighbours, the Ossetes.[46]

[177] The contact with the Indo-Europeans, especially with the Ossetes and their ancestors, must have been very important. We need but think of the powerful Scythians, and then, later on, of the Alans who made their presence felt as far east as China and as far west as Spain. Many of the customs, especially of the Cherkess, Abkhaz, and Ingushi have certainly been borrowed from the Ossetes : the many legends about ancient heroes, especially the so-called Nart-stories, and many a godlet now worshipped by the North Caucasian are certainly of Indo-European origin.

[178] If we now compare the Turco-Mongolian society with that of the North Caucasians and ancient Indo-Europeans we shall find a striking similarity in the family organizations of the three groups.[47] To point out a few of the more

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[46] Among other practices of the ancient Indo-Europeans might be mentioned child-marriages, the *snohačestvo*, the obligation of the bride to keep silence, the custom of veiling and covering the bride's face, mother-in-law inheritance, etc. See especially E. Hermann, "Die Eheformen der Urindogermanen," *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, pp. 39—62. We have based our description of the ancient Indo-European family on : Koppers, *op. cit.*, pp. 8—11 ; A. Nehring, *l. c.* ; O. Schrader, *op. cit.*, *passim* ; E. Hermann, *op. cit.*, *passim*, W. Philipp, *op. cit.*, pp. 17—43.

The ancient *Slavs* countenanced polygamy, a custom that continued to the tenth century A. D. Polygyny, however, was a privilege of the rich. The impediment of consanguinity and of disparity of socal rank were strictly insisted upon. Girls would be married off against their wills. We also find the *snohačestvo* among the ancient Slavs. A wife was acquired either by purchase or capture. A distinction between a joint-family (*rodovaja or bolšaja semja*) and the individual (*ocovskaja or malaja semja*) was made, with a patriarch (*starosta* or *staračina*) at the head. It is also interesting to note that the same concept of a household is found in Russia as in North Caucasia, namely "fireplace." Blood-beuds, bloodwite, the disadvantageous position of the female sex, the *patria potestas* and many other features of the Slavic family life very closely resemble the Caucasian society. Ancestor worship centred round the fireplace and the male head of the joint-family was the family-priest. Vestiges of the cult are still to be found in Ukraine (E. Ellnett, *Historic Origin and Social Development of Family Life in Russia*, pp. 2 ff.) For more about the Slavic family organization see Zdenko Vinski, *Die südslavische Grossfamilie in ihrer Beziehung zum asiatischen Grossraum*. Many of these elements are still found among the Armenians, Persians, Kurds, etc.

[47] See Koppers, *op. cit.*, p. 15 ; A. Nehring, *op. cit.*, pp. 169—173. As W. Schmidt pointed out more than 20 years ago in his *Völker und Kulturen*, elements of the pastoral nomadic civilization are also found among the Hamito-Semitic peoples.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1



essential parallels—characteristic of the Turco-Mongolian family are: the almost complete absence of mother-right and totemistic practices, the emphasis placed on the joint-family and the male members, special rights for the first-born son, importance of the male head of the family and the *patria potestas*, the disadvantageous position of the female sex, blood-feuds, exogamy, the *kalym*, which is usually paid in live-stock, the dread of incest, the severe penalties for sexual offenses, fireplace ceremony at weddings, the high esteem for the bride's virginity, the unusual craving for male children, the importance of the bridal procession, etc.

There is also a religious connection between the North Caucasians, the Indo-Europeans, and the Turco-Mongols, a connection that confirms our claim of the existence of a social connection between the three groups. It is not only the *similarity* of the religions of the three groups that we must keep in mind but also the intimate connection, the *organic* connection, between the nomadic social and religious forms. The solidarity which exists among the members of a sib, the great longing for male children, blood-feuds, the levirate, the *patria potestas*, the wedding custom of walking around the fireplace, and many other practices are fundamentally connected with ancestor worship and cult for the dead. Ancestor worship is one of the essential features of the religion of the Indo-Europeans, the Turco-Mongols, and the North Caucasians. Moreover, among all three groups ancestor worship is linked up with the worship of the fireplace. Another very essential part of the pastoral nomadic religion was the custom of sacrificing horses. W. Koppers has shown the great similarity between the horse-sacrifices of the Indo-European and Altai peoples;[48] R. Bleichsteiner proved beyond question the existence of the practice throughout the highlands of Caucasia.[49] Horse-sacrifices among the Indo-Europeans and the North Caucasians are certainly of Inner Asiatic origin.

Thus we see that even though the North Caucasians are not pastoral nomadic in the economic sense—the economy of the steppes is impossible in the mountains, especially in the unfertile valleys of the Caucasus—they are pastoral nomadic in their social organization. *A connection between the North Caucasian society and that of Inner Asia is beyond question.*

### 3. Vestiges of More Ancient Cultures In the Marriage and Family Customary Laws of the North Caucasians

As is only natural, the deeper we delve into the history of the marriage and family *adats* the more obscure the history becomes.

First of all there are the so-called mother-right vestiges which we must consider. It is interesting to note that the intensity of these vestiges among the three different groups of Caucasians (Northwestern, Northeastern, and Southern)

[48] W. Koppers, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 f, 18—22. See also W. Koppers, "Pferdeopfer und Pferdekult der Indogermanen," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, IV (1936), pp. 280—411.

[49] "Rossweihe und Pferderennen im Totenkult der kaukasischen Völker," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, IV (1936), pp. 412—495.